

# LAUNCHING A NEW MINISTRY

## IN A NEW STATE

### **Checklist for Launching a Kairos, Kairos Outside or Kairos Torch Ministry**

1. Initial inquiry made through the Executive Director of Kairos.
2. The national office sends out an Ecumenical Notice Letter to appropriate State Clergy.
3. Under the guidance of the national office, the initial volunteer group organizes a launch committee:
  - a. The launch committee elects a Chairperson to liaison with national and the committee signs the State Chapter Agreement;
  - b. The national office will register the corporation in the new state;
  - c. The national office will help the launch Chairperson open a Kairos bank account;
  - d. The national office will provide appropriate accounting and financial policies;
  - e. The national office will assist with volunteer recruitment and training;
  - f. The national office must approve the first rector/leader.
4. The national office may require new committee members to attend a designated weekend.
5. The new state launch committee must secure permission from institutional authority. (Institutional Agreement)
6. The prison Chaplain is encouraged to attend a 3 Day Short Course. (Not required, but strongly recommended.)
7. The launch committee obtains a weekend date from the prison.
8. The Kairos national office provides a one-day training workshop.
9. Begin team formation.
10. Kairos national office arranges for advisors to attend first weekend.

### **Initial Inquiry**

All inquiries into launching a Kairos ministry in a new state or country must be directed to the Executive Director of Kairos Prison Ministry, Inc., located in Winter Park, Florida.

People learn of the ministry through friends and acquaintances who have a history of working in the ministry. It is appropriate for those active in Kairos to offer to help in organizing a new ministry, but the national office must be notified immediately upon demonstration of interest by any new state. Many Kairos volunteers have helped launch new 4th day movements without the help or influence of the leadership concerned with their particular movement, but such is not the case with Kairos. Because of the unique circumstances of the environment in which we work and the ecumenical nature of the ministry, far more discipline and conformity to a standard is required of Kairos states than is true for most of the 4th Day movements.

The Kairos national office will provide the guidance and manuals necessary to begin the ministry. If friends in Kairos from other states have been instrumental in raising the interest to inquire about launching the ministry, those same friends will normally be invited by the national office to help launch the ministry, but guidance to launch the ministry will continue to be under the direction of the national office with help from the supporting state.

Initial inquiry may come from an institution that is interested in having a Kairos program offered in their institution, from clergy, a chaplain or a church organization interested in seeing the ministry offered in their area, or from an individual who is currently active in prison ministry.

The key factor in having an initial inquiry move ahead is to have a dedicated layperson step forward and volunteer to do whatever is necessary to launch the ministry. No substantive move can be made toward the organization of the ministry until that key person, male or female, steps forward.

The Kairos national office will try to assist the volunteers to launch the ministry through proper inquiry of existing potential support. If there is reason to believe sufficient support exists or can be developed, the judicatorial heads of the 4th Day movements and appropriate state clergy are sent an ecumenical notice letter of our intention to initiate Kairos ministry.

### **Ecumenical Notice Letter**

Heads of the 4th Day movements and appropriate state clergy are sent a notice letter of our intention to initiate Kairos ministry for a twofold purpose. The Letter states that we will invite members of their movements to participate in Kairos, and it gives them the respect and notice they deserve as we initiate Kairos ministry within their jurisdiction.

In practice, the layperson who is heading up the effort to organize the ministry may be uncomfortable in approaching the bishop of another denomination to seek his or her agreement to help organize the ministry. For this reason, the national office will undertake the task of properly notifying appropriate clergy in the new state. After the approach is made, a bishop or other senior denominational representative will quite often want to name persons in that particular denomination who are known to have an interest

in prison ministry to the launch committee. One bishop may contact other bishops on behalf of the launch committee. The bishops will frequently offer financial support in launching the ministry in their diocese or conference.

Kairos can trace much of the impact of the ministry to its ecumenicity. One of the great surprises for every new resident participant is that the team comes from virtually all denominations, and they obviously love one another and work in concert rather than in conflict. The prison environment fosters such a proprietary and judgmental view of religion that what they are seeing does not fit with their preconceived ideas of Christianity. Thus, our ecumenical approach serves to make the ministry far more dramatically effective than it would be if the team came from a single denomination.

From a simple mathematics point of view, it is also important for us to remember that historically only about 5% of those who attend a free world 4th Day movement weekend will ever respond to a call to prison ministry with Kairos. Those Cursillo-like ministries in prison, which have begun as single denomination ministries, have almost universally failed to be able to sustain themselves.

Conversely, the spiritual uplift to team members who step outside the confines of their own denomination to serve with other committed Christians in a ministry, joining in purpose and heart in a common cause, is such a rewarding experience that this singular aspect of the ministry attracts team members without number. It is often repeated that the spiritual lift from team formation in the ecumenical setting is worth all of the effort even if that were an end unto itself. One of the great secrets of Kairos, one of which we never speak but is no less real, is the affect it has on the team members. Many of us can attest to the fact that our own spiritual maturity took a giant leap forward only when we began ministry to others. Team members are blessed through ecumenical ministry presentation.

Perhaps surrendering our personal theological agendas may allow us to truly be servants to the unlovable rather than to our egos. As we die to ourselves, the Holy Spirit floods our being to make us more than we were.

Kairos has never had a “statement of faith.” Not by oversight, but by design. The Kairos board has addressed the issue on several occasions and the collective wisdom has always come around to a realization that such a statement would satisfy our desires for uniformity, control and position but would diminish ecumenical participation. The entire Kairos program represents our statement of faith.

## **Organization**

You will not always be fortunate enough to have every 4th Day movement provide members for the original launch committee. Many of the movements are quite young and have their own growth issues to deal with before they can help Kairos. And, some of those appointed by the heads of the movements will not be motivated to be as much help as you would like. The rule to remember is to make it as ecumenical as possible and to have a minimum of seven members, one chairman and six others. From that number,

sufficient enthusiasm and talent should arise to be able to carry the project to completion of the first weekend, when the launch committee automatically becomes the Kairos State Chapter committee.

One task of the launch committee is to assist the national office in the process of registering Kairos Prison Ministry, Inc. to do business in your state. Your state government will normally require a statement of good standing from the State of Florida dated within 30 days of when we file, and the national office will need the name and address of a person in the new state to accept any legal documents if suit where ever filed.

After the first Kairos weekend, the chairperson of the new state or a duly elected representative will represent the state as a non-voting delegate to the national board. The State Chapter committee is allowed a voting representative to the national board one year after the first Kairos weekend.

There is a lot of work to be done. Committee chairs must delegate responsibility and authority in matters of raising volunteer support, communications with the institution and Chaplain, fund raising, etc.

### **Observe A Kairos Weekend**

After deciding who will lead the first weekend in your state, and obtaining permission for that person from the Kairos Executive Director, make arrangements with the executive director for several launch committee members to observe a Kairos weekend. The Executive Director will try to choose a weekend, which is known to be well prepared and stable, fit into the time frame of the new organization, and is reasonably nearby.

### **Institutional Agreement**

The warden, superintendent or governor of the institution, together with the chaplain, must have signed an Institutional Agreement with the Kairos launch committee before team meetings begin for a short course in an institution. A sample Institutional Agreement is found in the Appendix.

The primary obligation of all employees of a department of corrections is the security of residents of the institution. That consideration must be foremost in their minds as they make any decision regarding residents. All team members must understand and support that fact in order to be effective members of a team in this ministry.

It must be remembered that the terms of this agreement obligate Kairos to the performance of stated acts as fully as it commits the institution to permitting those programs to be performed as stated. We must always remember, the institutions concern for security must be completely respected, regardless of what the agreement says. We are their guests. We are there to conduct ministry, and we should always be a blessing not a hindrance to the institution.

All team members are, of course, committed to faithful adherence to Kairos manuals and institutional rules. Violation of even a minor institutional rule will result in your immediate suspension from Kairos ministry. It is a commitment made by the State Chapter committee in order to protect the ministry and the safety of all concerned.

### **Institutional Preparation for Short Course or Retreat**

When a launch committee is planning to launch the new ministry, their first institutional contact may be with the chaplain. When the chaplain decides that the ministry is right for the institution, arrangements must be made to discuss the ministry with the warden, deputy wardens and the security chief.

An appointment for this, together with all subsequent appointments with the institution, will be arranged through the Chaplain. The Chaplain is the link with the institution, and it is through the Chaplain that Kairos always works. In a few institutions which do not maintain chaplains on staff, Kairos works through the programs director or a responsible party designated by the warden. Whatever the case, proper reference to the chain of command is of significant importance.

The Executive Director of Kairos, or someone whom he selects, will come to the state or country for this meeting to accompany the launch committee chairman, and will be the primary spokesman for Kairos Prison Ministry. The Executive Director will describe the ministry and explain the Institutional Agreement which must be signed before the ministry begins in the institution. The person who is going to be coordinator for the first weekend should accompany them.

A person designated by the Executive Director will advise the warden and Chaplain of the advantages and disadvantages of inviting Kairos to minister in the institution, calling their attention to the additional load on security forces, and the fact that some of Kairos' most powerful team members are ex-offenders who will be entering the institution.

Following this meeting, the chairperson should send a letter of appreciation to the warden or his counterpart and the chaplain.

The Chaplain will be urged to attend a 4th Day movement weekend before Kairos begins in the institution. It is not required that the Chaplain do this, but it is strongly urged. The Chaplain's experience of a 4th Day weekend will not only give the Chaplain basic insight concerning the program that the residents of the institution will experience, but it will provide an opportunity for free world spiritual support for the Chaplain, which is all too often absent. If there is not a convenient 4th Day movement weekend offered, the Chaplain may observe a Kairos weekend anywhere a Kairos is scheduled. This can be arranged by the national office, and will give insight concerning the program, but has the disadvantage of not affording a free world support community for the Chaplain.

## **Workshop for Volunteers**

After a sufficiently large group of potential volunteers has been raised to present the ministry, the Kairos national office will arrange for a one-day special workshop for volunteers. This workshop is normally presented on a Saturday and lasts all day, from approximately 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. It should be presented no less than one week and not more than two months before the first team meeting.

The workshop for volunteers clearly reveals to them what they are committing themselves to do and a little of how they will be expected to conduct themselves. They will all want to be doing their street weekend in the prison. The purpose of this workshop is to help eliminate in advance many of the problems that are brought to the ministry by volunteers who do not understand that Kairos is different and distinct from their street weekend. After the volunteer workshop, the rector/leader may proceed with team formation for the first weekend in the new state.

## **State Chapter Agreement**

A State Chapter Agreement is signed with Kairos which authorizes presentation of the weekend and subsequent ministry. The State Chapter Agreement is signed by the governing committee of the state who are responsible for all Kairos activities within that state. The State Chapter Agreement format is found at Appendix B.

## **Team Formation**

It is important for all team members to attend team formation meetings. They will be in the process of building a Christian community over approximately forty hours of team meetings. Scott Peck, in *A Different Drum*, says that community happens somewhere between thirty and forty hours. Kairos has found this to be true. Team members who do not attend the team meetings find it difficult to feel a part of the community. Once team formation starts, any change in the dynamics of the structure slows the formation of the community. Those who attend sporadically not only hurt their own absorption into the community, they handicap everyone else's progress as well.

## **Merchandising Agreement**

If an outside vendor or business intends to use the Kairos Trademark (Logo) for promotional purposes, such as apparel and other goods, they must execute the "Merchandising Agreement", found at Appendix B.

## **Advisors for the First Weekend**

The Kairos national office will provide experienced volunteers to work the first weekend as advisors to the team.

The Executive Director or someone appointed by the Executive Director will act as advisor to the rector/leader. Someone will also be appointed to be the advisor to the servant community who is extremely well experienced in all facets of the ministry.

The same process is followed for both the first men's institution and the first women's institution in the state.

**NOTES**